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THE BLOCKHOUSE MYSTERY

OR
HAL MAYNARD'S
CUBAN ROMANCE.



DOUGLAS
WELLS.

"MY PRISONERS, CABALLEROS!" MOCKED HAL, SPRINGING UPON THE SCENE.

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STARRY FLAG.

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THE BLOCKHOUSE MYSTERY;

OR,

Hal Maynard's Cuban Romance.

By DOUGLAS WELLS.

CHAPTER I.

A DANGEROUS ERRAND.

The scene upon which our story opens was a large tent toward the rear of our army of invasion in Cuba. The size of the tent and the sentry who was silently pacing back and forth in front of it would have told the experienced eye that it belonged to some important officer.

It was in fact the headquarters of General Shafter, himself.

At the moment when we venture to look inside, a tall young officer was entering the doorway. The general turned and faced him as he saluted and stood at attention.

"Lieutenant Maynard," said the elder man.

The young lieutenant bowed.

"I was ordered to report, sir," said he. For several moments after that nothing was said, while the general stood steadfastly regarding Hal Maynard with his keen gray eyes. He was evidently debating something within his mind, for finally he muttered half aloud:

"I think he can do it."

And then he stepped back into the tent.

"Lieutenant Maynard," said he, "take a seat. I wish to have a talk with you."

The young man obeyed the order, and then there was another short pause. Hal was of course anxious to know why the general had sent for him, but he did not venture to ask any questions.

He knew that he would learn before very long, and he was not mistaken in that.

"Lieutenant Maynard," began the general suddenly, "I have sent for you to propose to you a very dangerous venture."

Hal bowed and waited.

"Generally," said the other, "when there is work of this kind to be done, I call for volunteers. I know I should have many. But this work that I want done requires not only bravery and daring; it will need the utmost alertness of mind and body as well. It will take a great deal of cleverness."

BE PATRIOTIC—WEAR A BUTTON.

"I fear that is more than I can boast of," was Hal's response.

"I have selected you," said the general, "because I think otherwise. What you have achieved already in this campaign has made me think first of you in this matter."

The young officer bowed as the general paid him the compliment.

"I shall do my best," he said, "and hope you will not prove mistaken."

"You accept the task, then," said the general, with a slight smile. "It would be best for you to realize first how dangerous it is."

"I am always ready to do my duty," answered Hal.

"This is more than your duty," was the other's response. "It is something so much more dangerous than your duty that I should hesitate to ask it if it were not of the utmost importance."

"You may depend upon me to do my best," said the lieutenant calmly.

The general regarded him for a few moments in silence; and then he turned toward a chest in a corner of the tent.

"I will tell you what it is," he said.

He took out an envelope, and from that drew a letter. After glancing over it hastily he held it out toward Hal.

"You read Spanish, do you not?" he said.

"I do," answered the other.

"Very well; the letter explains itself. I think you will see what I want."

Hal took the note and read as follows:

"To Colonel Bernabe Garcia, Santiago:

"My Dear Sir:—The bearer of this letter is a person you can trust. He is an Englishman and expects no trouble in passing the American lines. But he has lived a number of years in Spain and is thoroughly in sympathy with our cause. You need have no doubts about him."

"I have under my command about two thousand men. They are eager to join

you in the defense of Santiago, but haste must be made as we have only five days' rations.

"Inform the bearer, Senor Robinson, what is the weakest point in the American lines and what chance we would stand of forcing our way in; send me full particulars as to the strength of General Linares' command, etc.

"Yours truly, Sileva."

"P. S.—Lest this letter should fall into other hands it would be best for me to add that Senor Robinson is a deaf mute, which will be a certain means of identification."

When he, Hal Maynard, had finished reading the letter he sat perfectly silent, gazing in front of him; the general eyed him narrowly.

"What do you make of it?" he inquired, as if anxious to test Hal's mind.

"As you say," the lad answered, "the letter explains itself. I presume that Senor Robinson has fallen into our hands."

"Exactly, he was captured this morning, within a short distance of the Spanish lines."

"And I presume he has been hung as a spy."

"He has not," said the general, "I have promised him his liberty."

Hal looked surprised for a moment; but he saw what the other meant.

"On condition I suppose," said he, "that he gives me the necessary information so that I can play his part"

"I thought you were fairly quick," said General Shafter, with a smile. "We may be able to manage this yet. I should say the chances were about even."

The general tapped a bell at his side.

"Bring in the prisoner," he said to the orderly who answered.

The command was quickly obeyed and two sentries led in Senor Robinson; he looked rather uncomfortable. He was a short thick-set man with very red face

and still more red whiskers; he glanced from the general to Hal nervously.

"Mr. Robinson," said the former, "this is Lieutenant Maynard."

Hal looked surprised, for he had understood that the man was a deaf mute. But he saw that one of the two sentries was writing on a small slate what the general said.

As soon as the prisoner understood that he was being introduced he bowed very humbly.

"He is the officer to whom you will give your information," added the general.

I have already explained to this man," he continued to Hal, what I intend to do. You see he does not sympathize with Spain as much as he does with himself, and he is quite ready to tell us what we want. I have told him that I mean to send an officer in with this letter and that his life depends upon the officer's success. If you do not return in three days I shall assume that he had not told you the truth and hang him."

Hal looked rather startled at that calm remark, but he saw that such a threat would prove the best way to get at the facts.

Hal's quick brain had realized by that time just what duty was before him, and he saw that he had indeed a dangerous task on hand.

He had to enter the Spanish lines pretending to be a deaf mute and a friend of the writer of the letter, whom he had never seen in his life.

But Hal did not flinch; he had already declared to the general that no danger would stop him.

"You are willing to undertake the commission?" the officer inquired.

"I am," was the lad's simple response.

"Very well," said the other. Be ready to start in an hour. You will need that

long to get what information you require."

The sentries were signaled to lead their prisoner out, and Hal followed, his busy mind hard at work on the all important problem.

The reader, of course, understands that it was necessary for Hal to learn something about "Senor Robinson," and where he came from. The sentries who were guarding him seemed to have been instructed as to that already, for they took the man into a tent and when Hal followed an orderly brought in some pencils and paper.

"We will save this conversation," thought the lieutenant as he began to write grimly. "And if Mr. Robinson tells any lies he'll wish he hadn't."

And so for the next hour Hal sat on the floor of the tent, exchanging letters with the prisoner. The latter seemed perfectly willing to tell all he knew.

He described "Sileva" (who was a Spanish general), the army under his command, and the place where they were encamped. It was a part of country with which Hal was familiar.

Also, and most fortunately, the lad had been to Spain some years ago, and so he had no doubt that he could answer any question that might be asked him about that country; he learned with relief that so far as the prisoner knew no one in Santiago was acquainted with him.

Hal knew that all this would soon be a matter of life and death with him so it may readily be believed that he asked everything which he could possibly manage to think of that would be necessary.

He even got a list of the names of the officers under General Sileva, with a brief description of each. When he finished interrogating Mr. Robinson he felt almost as if he had really been with that army.

"I suppose," Hal mused, "that I'll get

READ THE GREAT PREMIUM OFFER ON LAST PAGE.

into trouble by not knowing the deaf and dumb alphabet; but if there's any one in Santiago knows it I'll have to pretend that it's different from my English one."

And with that thought in his mind Hal arose, and bowing to the prisoner, left the tent. He changed his uniform for civilian clothing and then he was all ready for his dangerous mission. He went to General Shafter's tent to get his last instructions.

CHAPTER II.

IN THE ENEMY'S HANDS.

Hal had already guessed about what it was that General Shafter wanted. He learned from the deaf man that Colonel Garcia was in command of one of the small block-houses in the outer defenses of Santiago. Naturally a visit there would give the American a chance to observe much that would be useful.

"Notice everything you can," the general said. "See where the defenses are weak and learn how many troops there are in Santiago. I would give much to know that one fact, for the reports that reach me are very contradictory indeed, and I am absolutely in the dark as to the enemy's strength."

"I will try to find out for you," said Hal.

"But do not ask any questions," said the other. "That will awaken suspicions. Try to learn in the course of casual conversation. And you ought to find out much by simply listening to the officers."

They would talk with impunity in the young man's presence, believing him deaf. Hal saw a splendid chance there.

"And what am I to do about the information Sileva wants?"

"I have been thinking about that," said the general. "I am puzzled to see

how to manage it. You can't return Sileva, and we couldn't send this man Robinson. And yet if we could manage it I could gain considerable advantage."

"In what way?" Hal asked.

"I could send word to Sileva to come by a certain road and practically annihilate his troops. But I hardly think it can be managed."

Hal had been thinking over that problem; he had an idea, which he stated very definitely, as became him.

"If I should reach that Spanish block house by a dash, with some of the American sharpshooters firing at me," he began, "I could tell a yarn about having escaped through the lines with my letters."

"And what good would that do?"

"I could say it was impossible for me to return to Sileva and so have another messenger sent. If you will tell me what road you would want the reinforcements to choose I could very easily describe that as the best one."

The general was silent and thoughtful for a few moments. Hal thought from the look upon his features that he liked the scheme.

"It would be a good way for you to enter the lines," he said. "It might divert suspicion."

When the general finally made up his mind it was to accept Hal Maynard's suggestion. He was going to make a dash into the Spanish lines.

Before he went General Shafter handed him a little slate and several pencils.

"Those were what the prisoner used in his conversation," said he. "You will find them more convenient than paper."

Hal took the articles and slipped them under his coat.

"Now, remember," the general said as a last caution. "You are going into the enemy's lines as a spy and you take your

life in your hands. The slightest slip will mean your ruin."

The officer rose and stood before Hal as he delivered his impressive warning.

"They will test you and try you by every means in their power; you may depend upon it that they will not trust any secrets to you without making every effort to trip you up. Vigilance must be your motto, vigilance every second of the time."

"They will not catch me," said Hal, calmly.

"You must remember," the other went on, "that you are deaf and dumb. If you make a sound or let them know that you hear a sound you are lost. And as to the questions they ask you about Sileva, you must do the best you can. When you see a chance in a day or two, make your escape and return."

The general stepped to the door, as a signal that the interview was at an end. But Hal had one other suggestion to make.

He had been thinking long and hard about the work that was before him, and one possibility had occurred to him, a possibility so vague and wild that he hardly dared to speak of it.

"General Shafter," he said, "if I am not mistaken, the block-house which this Colonel Garcia commands is the one on a hill just opposite our works."

"It is," answered the other.

"And it is one of the strongest of them all."

"It is the strongest."

"It would cost many lives to take it," continued Hal, meditatively. "A charge up that hill would be costly. I was thinking perhaps if I failed—if I was discovered or couldn't learn anything—that I might—"

"Might what?"

"I do not know exactly," answered

the other, hesitatingly. "But there is no telling. General Shafter, if at any time you should notice any signs of a disturbance up there—see the Spanish flag come down—you might take it as a signal that it would be a good time to attack."

The general could not help smiling.

"What could you do?" he asked.

"If I were discovered," the young officer added, "I should be quite desperate and should try anything—to set the block-house afire, to throw away the breech blocks of the guns—anything I could, as a last resort."

"I hope you will not get into such straits," the other answered. "But," he added, smiling, "if I see the flag fall I will attack the block-house. We are ready to begin anyway."

And no more was said upon the subject. General Shafter left the tent to give orders as to Hal's dramatic "escape" from the American lines.

On his way through the camp Hal chanced to meet his boon companion the young Cuban, Juan Ramirez. Hal had only time to stop for a moment, however.

"I've got an important commission," he said.

"What is it?"

The other looked wise and shook his head provokingly.

"Can't tell," he said. "It's secret."

"You needn't think you're the only one with important work to do," laughed Juan. "I've got some exciting work before me, too."

"Well, we'll have interesting tales to tell when we get back," answered Hal. "Good-by."

He turned and hurried away, leaving Juan watching him.

"He thinks I don't know," Juan smiled. "I think he'll see me again before very long."

Meanwhile Lieutenant Maynard, in

SHOW YOUR COLORS—GET ONE OF OUR FREE BADGES.

company with an officer who was in charge of the American pickets and had been detailed by Shafter to aid in the plot, made his way along a rough trail to the outposts of the army.

And there the matter was soon arranged. Hal was shown the block-house he wanted. There was a dense thicket that ran half way across the valley to the foot of the hill upon which the little fort stood. The young officer concluded to make his way through that thicket.

"Please be careful that you don't hit me," he said to half a dozen of the sharp-shooters who were detailed to do the firing.

And those were his last words. He left the lines and began a long tramp through the dense and swampy underbrush toward the Spanish outposts.

In about ten minutes he reached the edge of the cleared place; he paused but to collect his faculties and take one deep breath. Then he sprang out.

The very instant that he came into sight there were three shots in quick succession. Up the hill far ahead Hal could see the Spaniards running about gesticulating excitedly. None of them fired on him, however, for he had his handkerchief in his hand waving it wildly, meantime running with all his might to get out of range of the American rifles.

It was rather a dramatic incident, even if it was only in fun, and it was not very long either, before Hal ceased to find it as much fun as he had thought.

For the firing from the rear grew more rapid, and to the young American's alarm he suddenly heard two or three bullets singing by his head. A second later he felt one graze his arm.

For a moment he did not know what to think, but it finally dawned upon him that some other sentries who were not "in the joke" were firing on him in ear-

nest. And it may be believed that he redoubled his speed when he made that discovery.

It seemed a long run up that hill, but the young officer pressed on, his eyes fixed on the block-house ahead. He saw several Spaniards there shouting to him and watching his flight.

The bullets grew thicker, but fortunately enough Hal had been a good ways from the pickets when he started, and it would have taken an expert to bring him down at the range. The bullet which tore his coatsleeve was the only one that Hal

And when he came to think it over he was glad that one had struck as it did, for it left a stain of blood on his coat and was better than any letter of introduction for Hal. It made his escape look ten times more real. felt.

And so his heart was thumping triumphantly as he bounded up the slope. He dashed straight on until he reached the Spanish trenches.

And there he found it best to stop. For a soldier sprang up and leveled his bayonet at him.

"Halt!" he shouted.

And weak with feigned exhaustion, the lad let himself sink down upon the ground, while an officer came toward him from the trench.

Hal was "in the enemy's hands."

CHAPTER III.

SEÑOR ROBINSON.

When Hal stretched himself out on the ground to get his breath it was also to collect his wits; for he knew that the time of trial had come. From that instant there was to be neither rest nor peace for him; he had to keep saying to himself night and day and unceasingly:

"I am deaf! I am deaf!"

The officer came toward him with his sword in his hand.

"Who are you?" he demanded, speaking of course in Spanish.

Hal chose to be too much exhausted to move; he lay where he was, panting heavily.

"Who are you?" repeated the other.
"What do you want?"

Hal raised himself on one elbow and gazed about him wildly; then as if for the first time noticing the man, he fumbled under his jacket for a moment hastily.

He staggered to his feet and held out his precious letter.

The man took it and after taking a sharp glance at the blood-stained clothing, opened it—for it was not sealed.

He read it through and then stepped toward the trenches.

"Come this way," he said.

Now very likely he did not mean that for any sort of a test. It was doubtless as natural to him as to the American.

And Hal was actually starting—his knees were half bent, when suddenly, like a flash of lightning, the thought dared through his mind sending shivers down his back and making his very heart stand still.

"Almost caught already!"

He was just barely in time to straighten himself up again; and calming his face as well as he could, he stared after the officer.

The latter had turned to lead the way; noticing that Hal was not following he turned and saw the stupid look on the young man's face.

"Carramba! I forgot!" he laughed.

And then he beckoned. That Hal understood, and followed. That one incident was better for him than a thousand of General Shafter's warnings. For the first time Hal realized what a task he had

upon his hands. It made him shiver to think of it; he felt that half a dozen such shocks as that would give him nervous prostration.

But it was too late to back down then, even had he wanted to.

The two crossed the outermost defenses, the Spanish soldiers staring eagerly at the stranger. They entered a small tent, evidently that of the lieutenant of the guard.

There was an officer seated in front of a campstool, using it as a writing desk. He glanced up as Hal entered.

He was apparently busy, for he jerked his thumb over his shoulder.

"Step one side for a moment," said he.

But that time Hal's nerves were strung; he never moved.

The officer had looked down at his writing again; but he glanced up with a look of annoyance.

"Santa Maria!" he exclaimed. "I said step to one side."

Just as Hal was fumbling for his slate the other officer explained that he was deaf, and catching Hal by the arm led him aside.

"Who is he?" demanded the officer of the guard when he was at last ready to attend to Hal, "some Yankee spy?"

"No, señor," answered the other. "He is a messenger from General Sileva."

The officer opened his eyes wide and then read the letter handed to him.

"But are you sure this is not a put-up job?" he demanded.

"I do not know," the first officer responded. "He seems to have been troubled in getting past the Yankees."

"It may be a trick," said the other. "They are sly. We'll have to test him."

"He seems deaf enough," remarked Hal's escort.

From what Hal knew that something was coming; he was not surprised when the officer of the guard held out one hand.

"Let me see your wound," he said.

That was easy. Instead of the wound, Hal extended his little slate.

And the Spaniards laughed.

"He's deaf enough," said one of them. "Take him to the colonel."

"Come," said the other, starting toward the door.

But Hal didn't come until he was beckoned. Then he went out. He had leisure to glance about him. What he saw may be easily described—a low, square block-house bristling with guns and surrounded with deep trenches and the much vaunted barbed wire fences. At the door of the block-house there was standing a tall, handsome officer whom Hal knew by the uniform to be a colonel—he had no doubt that this was Garcia.

And so it proved; the other officer saluted respectfully, and handed over the letter.

The colonel read it and then stared at Hal under his black eyebrows.

Hal, "exhausted" by his long chase, had sunk down upon a cask near by.

"Look out! that's dynamite you're sitting on!" cried the officer suddenly.

Once more Hal felt the impulse to move thrill through his frame. There are few people the word dynamite will not make to jump.

But Hal had been muttering to himself "I am deaf!" And so he checked himself again, though the cold shiver ran down his back again.

The officer had been eyeing him narrowly; but he saw nothing suspicious. Hal only held out the slate and pencil.

The man took it and gazed into space a moment as if in deep thought; if he had known what a quick and clever brain

was here opposed to his he would not have let the thinking be so evident.

Suddenly he wrote a few words and passed them to Hal. They were these:

"How is General Sileva's daughter?"

And there was the list. The young American's thoughts were fairly surging.

He did not think that was a natural question for the officer to ask under the circumstances. Coming after the dynamite question, it was a thousand chances to one it was a trap; the colonel's thoughtful air made that even more likely.

The natural answer for Hal would have been "She's quite well." But he took a desperate chance, staked his success on one throw.

"I didn't know he had any," he wrote, without a second's hesitation.

And Hal saw by the way the officer's face cleared that he had won the throw. Sileva had no daughter, and Garcia was foiled.

The lad thought that his danger was about over then; and for awhile it seemed so.

Hal took the slate and wrote on it:

"Give me something to eat and tie up this wound for me." That seemed natural, he thought; he was pretending to have made a long journey.

"How did you get past the Americans?" asked the officer.

"Made a dash," answered Hal.

"And how is General Sileva?"

"Well," wrote the American, "but hungry."

The Spaniard smiled at that.

"We are hungry, too," he muttered, half under his breath.

"How are his men? Are any of the officers wounded?" he wrote.

Hal didn't know that, but it would do no harm to guess; he ran over the list of the officers he had learned.

"There was one slightly wounded,"

"ALLEE SAME, BULLEE NICK CARTER!"

he wrote; "a short dark man. I forget his name."

"Castelar?" inquired Garcia.

Again a trap, thought Hal; at any rate it was if Robinson's descriptions were right.

"No," he wrote, "Castelar's very tall, I think. This man's name began with a B."

"Benito?" wrote the colonel.

Again a test; thank heavens for that list of officers!

"No," wrote Hal. "It was—(a long pause)—Bosa!"

And once more the colonel's countenance cleared.

But he was a very suspicious man evidently; he got up and strolled away.

About two minutes later the American heard a step behind him. He knew that some sort of a trick was coming, but he dared not turn.

He steadied his nerves, gathered himself together and waited. Fortunately he had a second's warning, or this trial would have floored him.

He heard the sharp click of a revolver trigger; and then as he held his breath and waited there came a deafening report, right at Hal's ear!

CHAPTER IV.

HAL IN TROUBLE.

Again Hal's nerves were equal to the test; he knew that sharp eyes were watching him; but he did not give so much as a start.

The smoke drifted in front of him, however, he turned and stared. He saw a Spanish soldier grinning at him, the revolver still smoking in his hand.

Now Hal was playing a part, and he was quick to act. He had no reason for assuming humility, and several reasons for assuming something else. He clinched

his fists, and springing up flung himself at that soldier's throat.

The man staggered back in alarm, there was a moment's struggle, interrupted by the arrival of Colonel Garcia, who came running up, laughing at the turn things had taken.

But Hal was in no mood for laughing he shook his fists in the colonel's face, gesticulating wildly and making inarticulate sounds as deaf mutes do.

Then he seized a pencil and wrote savagely. He began with a few Spanish "cuss words," at which the officer laughed still more.

"Por Dios! What's the matter?" Hal demanded, finding writing words a poor way to quarrel.

"He was only trying you to see if you were deaf," was the answer.

Hal knew by that time that the officer was persuaded, but he wished to clinch the matter and prevent any more nerve-racking tests. So he kept on getting mad.

"I don't choose to be tried," he scribbled hastily. "And I'm not going to be treated as if I were a spy, either. I came here as your guest, and if you have any doubts of me let me go. I'm a friend of Sileva's, and I brought this message as a favor. If you don't know how to treat me I'll get out of here."

Hal had quite some sense of humor, and he could hardly keep from laughing himself as he wrote that. But the effect it had was just what he wanted. For the colonel apologized humbly. And Hal felt he wouldn't dare any more tests. But he did not relax any of his vigilance on that account.

He still looked a little indignant, as much as to say that it wouldn't take much to make him clear out of there altogether; the officer was now as polite as he could be.

He sent for a surgeon, and the lad's slight scratch was bandaged; food was brought and he ate it ravenously—as if he had not eaten anything for a week.

The colonel waited until he was through, and then taking his slate began a conversation. He inquired where the Spanish general's troops were, and what they were doing, all of which was answered by the information Robinson had given.

Whether it was correct or not, Hal did not know; but then neither did the other man, so it was all right.

From that the question turned to what adventures Hal had met with himself. He described some very thrilling ones; also he did not forget to add that he had examined the American lines and found just where Sileva could force them.

In response to the other question Hal indicated the road Shafter had told him. As an actual fact, it was not a strongly guarded road then at any rate, and so the Spaniard, who knew some about the matter himself, was convinced that Hal was sincere.

So far everything had gone with marvelous good fortune for the daring young American; it must be admitted that he had managed the thing cleverly.

But he felt somehow that he could hardly hope for such luck all the time; and so he did not for an instant relax his vigilance.

He thought that Garcia might consider it an excellent time while he was busy in conversation to make some slight test behind his back.

Hal was right in being on his guard. But when the danger actually came it was a danger far less easy to guard against than that.

In fact, it was one that almost brought the lad's triumph to an end.

The Spaniard was evidently not used

to a written conversation; he found it painfully slow.

He sat back for a moment, knitting his brows in thought. Then suddenly he muttered an exclamation.

"Santa Maria!"

Hal, suspecting a new danger, watched him narrowly; he called an officer.

"Send for Lieutenant Varez," said he. Hal watched the man disappear. Colonel Garcia wrote on the slate:

"I remember I've a man who can converse with you on his fingers."

And the unfortunate "deaf man" felt the blood curdling in his veins; here was a trial indeed.

He seized a pencil and wrote hastily:

"It won't do any good."

"Why not?"

"Because I only know the English signs."

And when the Spaniard wrote his reply to that Hal felt he would sink through the earth.

"This man has been to England."

Hal had never been in a more desperate fix than that in his life. His mind was in a whirl.

He knew that he had only a few seconds to think, and that his life depended on the result. He was almost inclined to spring up and make a dash for liberty.

But he knew that that would be suicide, and that he must stay and face the ordeal out.

It was not very long before Lieutenant Varez appeared and saluted his superior.

"Lieutenant," the colonel said, "this young man is a messenger from General Sileva, but he's deaf and dumb."

"I see."

"I thought I would ask you to act as interpreter for me."

"I will be pleased to do it," answered the other.

He turned toward Hal and raised his

hands. But before he could begin to speak the American began making motions at a great rate.

He knew nothing about the deaf and dumb alphabet, at least no more than any one knows who had occasionally seen deaf mutes conversing; but he had a vague idea about it from that, and so he went to work with all his might.

As for the lieutenant, he stared in considerable surprise.

"Can you make out what he's saying," inquired the colonel.

"Not a word," was the answer.

"What's the matter?"

"I'm sure I don't know. He must use a different system."

Hal went on a while longer, and then wound up with a flourish and gazed at the lieutenant anxiously as much as to say "Savey?"

But the lieutenant only shook his head. It was his turn then, and he began in the regular deaf and dumb alphabet.

But he had hardly made a dozen letters before Hal signaled vigorously that he didn't understand.

He seized the slate and wrote hurriedly in English:

"Don't you know the Portsmouth system?"

The lieutenant read it and shook his head.

"Never heard of it," said he.

Hal was not surprised at that, having invented the name on the spur of the moment; but it seemed to answer his purpose to perfection.

In fact it seemed that Hal's clever trick was about to succeed. But unfortunately appearances were deceptive.

For Hal did not know, could not know, how very absurd his gestures had appeared to the lieutenant, who was used to conversing with deaf mutes. The lieu-

tenant was, moreover, a good bit sharper than the old colonel.

"Don't you know the regular system?" he wrote.

"No," Hal answered.

"You're the first one I every met who didn't," responded the lieutenant.

"They don't use it where I come from," replied Hal.

"Where's that?"

"England."

"What part?"

"Sheffield," wrote Hal, at a desperate venture. "That's a long way from Portsmouth," answered the lieutenant, suspiciously. "But I've been there, and I never heard anything about your way of talking."

In answer to that our friend merely shrugged his shoulders as much as to say:

"You can't blame me for that."

Hal's state of mind during that ordeal was a far from enviable one; he realized that he was being cornered and driven into a very unpleasant position indeed.

He soon made up his mind that the best course of action for him to follow would be the one he had tried with the colonel.

Meanwhile the other, whose suspicions were evidently awakened, asked another question:

"Just let me see you talk some by that new system," he wrote.

And that was Hal's chance; he frowned angrily.

"What for?" he demanded.

"Nothing. I just want to see how it goes."

The American flushed angrily.

"I'm not on the witness stand," he wrote hastily, "and I'm tired of being suspected."

And with that he set down his pencil and rose to his feet, staring about him indignantly.

What the effect of that would be he did not know, but it was his only hope. He meant to continue on that tack and refuse to be cross-questioned any more. The Spaniards had no way of making him talk.

Lieutenant Varez, who was evidently very distrustful of Hal, led Colonel Garcia aside and held a whispered conversation.

What was the import of it Hal could not tell, though he strained his ears. The lieutenant evidently did not mean for him to hear.

But Hal could see that he was trying to persuade the colonel of something.

And evidently he succeeded. When Hal learned what it was he almost collapsed. For the whole thing came like a thunder clap.

"Very well," he heard Garcia say, "go ahead."

And the other man came over toward Hal; to Hal's amazement he seized him by the arm.

"I guess you've run your race," he said abruptly. "You're under arrest. You're a spy."

CHAPTER V.

HAL UNDER ARREST.

That was the most frightful test Hal had so far had to face. For that appalling announcement he was absolutely unprepared.

And it was evidently a test. The lieutenant's keen black eyes were fixed on Hal's countenance, watching for the slightest start or the faintest change of color.

He held the lad's arm, also, so that he could feel if the announcement had any effect.

But Hal's command of his nerves at that moment surprised even himself. He

had been bracing himself for some test, and he never gave a sign.

He stared blankly at the officer; then after half a minute of suspense had passed he felt that he had won; and reaching round with his other hand, he jerked the lieutenant's grip free and stepped back angrily.

He held out the slate with a haughty gesture. Varez frowned.

"Oh, come, now!" he exclaimed. "This won't go. You're not deaf and you know it."

But Clif only held out the slate.

His first alarm at the officer's terrible announcement had passed quickly, for he felt that it was only a test.

He did not think that the suspicions were awakened enough to warrant his ordering an arrest.

But Hal had a considerably more clever enemy to deal with than he had thought.

His consternation may be imagined when Lieutenant Varez took the slate and wrote:

"You are under arrest; you are a spy."

Fortunately Hal was not compelled to repress his alarm and indignation then; he glanced at the lieutenant.

At first he was evidently too mad to write the lieutenant returned his stare.

"What have I done?" he finally demanded.

"You are a Yankee spy," the other answered. "You are no more deaf than I am."

"You are a fool," was Hal's curt response to that; he was playing anger again.

"Follow me to the guard tent," responded the Spaniard.

"I shall appeal to the British consul," wrote Hal.

"You may appeal to the devil if you like," answered the other. "You will be hung to-day."

HOW DO YOU LIKE "THE HUMAN FLY?"

Those were appalling words; but angry though the Spaniard evidently was, strange to say the words did not frighten Hal.

For he kept his wits about him still, and he felt that the words were not true. He knew in the first place that the man had neither evidence nor even suspicions enough to warrant such a course.

And in the second place if the Spaniard had really been so sure Hal was not deaf, why did he not merely say all this to him instead of writing it.

"I'm not done yet by a jug full," thought Hal. "And I'll fool the lieutenant as well as the old colonel."

To the last threat of the officer he did not answer; he merely put away his slate, and folding his arms favored him with a look of scorn.

The two stood regarding each other for several moments in silence, and then the lieutenant turned away.

"Follow me," he said.

But though he didn't know it that trick had been tried on Hal before. The American, instead of obeying, proceeded calmly to walk over toward Colonel Garcia.

When Varez saw that he was not followed he muttered an impatient exclamation and took him by the arm.

Clif shook him off, but followed then; they entered the guard tent again.

The same officer was seated there.

"Good-morning," said the lieutenant. "The colonel has ordered this fellow under arrest."

"What's the matter?" asked the other. "Oh, he's a spy."

"What!"

"Yes."

"And isn't he deaf?"

"No, indeed. No more than I am. He's a Yankee. He doesn't even know

how to speak the deaf and dumb language."

"Carramba!" exclaimed the other. "I thought he was fooling all along."

"What do you suppose will be done with him?" he asked, a moment later.

"He'll be hung."

"When?"

"To-day."

"Did the colonel say so?"

"Yes; he did."

"That'll be two of them then. I've got that other fellow locked up tight."

"Put this one in with him. These Yankees must be terrible anxious to learn about us—that makes four spies in one week."

"That's so. But we can hang all they send."

"Did you see that fellow hung yesterday?"

"Did I! I helped haul the rope. Madre de dios, how he did squirm!"

"It must have been an unpleasant sight."

"Carramba! It was. I never want to see another. I never saw such a horribly distorted face in my life; he gurgled and kicked and turned perfectly black in the face."

"It's horrible," said Varez. "I don't see why they don't shoot them instead. I once saw a man hung and the rope broke and he fell. They had to tie him up again, and he yelled and screamed; he nearly chewed his tongue off, and his neck was cut half through."

The reader of course understands that this edifying conversation was all meant for Hal. Hal understood that himself, and so no doll could have worn a more blank expression than he did.

He knew that Lieutenant Varez kept his keen, piercing eyes upon him all the time, but not a sign of hearing anything did Hal give.

The conversation on the subject of hanging continued. The cunning Varez grew quite eloquent, throwing in the most harrowing details and discussing Hal's fate with utmost indifference.

But Hal was even more indifferent than he.

"It's funny about that man we caught yesterday," observed the officer of the guard. "Wasn't he clever, though! You know I never once thought he was a spy; but the colonel is so watchful."

"And he never hesitates, either," laughed Varez, "Santa Maria! if he once gets the idea into his head that a man's a spy, up he goes whether he's a spy or not. I wouldn't give one peseta for this fellow's chance."

"Nor I," said the other. "But shall we put them in together—I mean this one with the other?"

"Why not?"

"They might put up some job to get away."

"Put a double guard over them, and handcuff this chap here."

With that the lieutenant turned and strode out of the tent. A moment later two soldiers stole up behind Hal.

He knew they were coming, and why. But he dared not let on.

And suddenly both his hands were seized and jerked behind his back. Hal felt the cold steel of the handcuffs as they were snapped about his wrists.

"Take him into the other tent," said the officer of the guard, "and don't let him get away. Colonel Garcia's going to hang him this afternoon."

CHAPTER VI.

ANOTHER SPY.

Hal's coolness at that time may seem incredible; it surprised even himself, when he came to look back upon that adventure. But then he did not feel the least alarm, for he was quite sure that the whole thing was only a "bluff."

And so he found it much easier to act as if he heard nothing; but he had a hard task to allay the suspicions of Lieutenant Varez.

The two soldiers marched Hal across a short space inside of the enclosure to another tent before which there was a sentry marching. The flap of the tent was closed, but one of the soldiers raised it and pushed Hal unceremoniously inside.

There they left him and Hal gazed about him anxiously; it was half dark and he could not see clearly at first. But he made out a figure lying on the ground.

It was that of a man, apparently asleep. His face was turned away, but the young lieutenant could see that his hands were also handcuffed. He saw also that the man wore an American uniform, that of a private in the regular infantry.

A moment later the man, becoming conscious of the fact that some one had entered, turned over and sat up.

Hal had no doubt but that this was the other spy he had heard spoken of; he gazed at the man in some anxiety.

He was a tall, handsome-looking fellow; he returned Hal's curious glance with interest.

He could easily see from the young officer's face that he was not a Spaniard; and the handcuffs told the rest of the story.

"Good heavens! have they got you, too?" he cried.

That was Hal's greatest temptation; to this companion in misery he felt he surely could trust himself. His heart went out to the unfortunate man.

But the young officer was too wise to take any risks, and too quick to be taken off his guard; he only stared at his fellow prisoner.

He tried instinctively to reach for his slate and pencil, but his hands were tied and he could not.

The other looked at him in some surprise.

"What's the matter?" he asked. "Why don't you answer me?"

Hal shook his head energetically, and then, the slate being under his coat, he managed to wriggle it loose so that it fell at his feet.

The other noticed it and then the truth flashed over him.

"Oh, you are playing deaf, are you," said he.

That question almost brought Hal Maynard down.

Though he dared not speak to let the Spaniards outside hear him, it seemed the most natural thing in the world to nod an answer, which would put him on friendly terms with the other prisoner.

And, in fact, the impulse almost carried the day.

Hal had begun to move his head when suddenly another thought, a terrible one, swept over him.

Suppose this was Lieutenant Varez's scheme! Suppose this man was not a real prisoner! Suppose he was a Spaniard, or a traitor, setting a trap for Hal!

The thought turned Hal's hands to ice, he checked himself just an instant in time and stood almost paralyzed with horror.

Such a peril as that gives an awful shock to one's nerves; Hal was almost

prostrated, and he sank down on the floor of the tent and fairly gasped for breath.

Meanwhile the other was quite naturally surprised at Hal's strange action; he looked at him in amazement, and as for our deaf man he sat perfectly motionless for at least a minute recovering his wits once more. That last trial had completely unnerved him.

He hoped that his face had shown no signs of his emotions. Apparently it had not, for the stranger continued to stare.

"By George! perhaps he's really deaf!" Hal heard him mutter.

And then suddenly he began to speak again.

"Friend," he said, "I don't know if your deafness is assumed or not, but I pity you in either case, for that man Colonel Garcia is a perfect fiend. He caught me, and if you can fool him you'll surprise me, I can tell you."

Hal continued to stare, giving no sign that he understood; the other was evidently puzzled.

"But I suppose you're wise to keep up the bluff as long as you can," said he. "There may be some hope."

There was a moment's silence after that.

"I don't think you're deaf," said the stranger suddenly.

Hal nearly gave a start at that; he was more than convinced then that this man was really a prisoner. He felt like yelling at him:

"If you don't think so, I wish you'd keep it to yourself and not let these Spaniards overhear you!"

But the other apparently did not think of that.

"I'll tell you why," he continued, confidentially. "I know they don't take anybody in our army who's the least bit deaf, and I remember seeing you there."

That was another remark which tried Hal's nerves.

He did not know but what that might be true; he might easily have found out by asking the man where he had seen him, but he did not dare, and so he was obliged to remain in uncertainty.

He still held to his resolution to say nothing, though his fellow prisoner looked wistfully at him.

"I wish you could manage to talk some, comrade," he said. "I'm awfully lonely, and I've got to die to-night."

Again Hal crushed his emotions down; those words were spoken with such terrible earnestness and sadness that they went straight to the young officer's heart.

But he had his duty, and he sternly checked himself.

"Very well, friend," said the other, with a sigh. "You know best, but it's hard—oh, so hard!"

And after that there was a silence, a long heart-racking silence. Hal was thinking—trying his best to make up his mind whether or not he dared make one sign to his unfortunate fellow-prisoner. Certainly the problem was a hard one.

His thoughts were interrupted once by the unfortunate man.

"By George! I didn't think of it before," he gasped. "Comrade, have you got to die to-night, too? Is it so?"

And still Hal was obdurate, and his eyes stared blankly at the other. Not one sign did he give.

The man regarded him with a puzzled look on his face.

"I don't know what to make of him," he groaned under his breath. "Perhaps he is deaf, after all. And yet it can't be—it isn't possible. But he must have a heart of stone if he isn't. A heart of stone!"

The man continued gazing longingly at Hal; what was going on in Hal's breast the reader may guess.

The pathos of the soldier's situation

and his tones had had their effect on the other's sympathies. With all his heart he longed to speak to him; and yet he dared not.

The man continued to keep his eyes riveted on Hal's face, with a longing look whose intensity was born of the fact that he was then in the very face of death.

Then suddenly he turned and flung himself down on the ground, burying his face in his hands.

"Oh, God, my wife!" Hal heard him sob.

And the man's great frame shook convulsively, and he burst into tears. There were tears in Hal's eyes, too, as he watched him.

For perhaps ten minutes not a word more was spoken; the man's sobbing fit passed away and he grew calmer. He sat up and looked at Hal through his teardimmed eyes.

And then suddenly a new idea seemed to occur to him, for he lay down on the floor of the tent and peered under; he had no hands free to lift it, but he managed the task with his foot.

"There's nobody listening," he muttered. "Merciful Providence, I wonder if he can hear me!"

Trembling all over, the man crept close to Hal; he sat down beside him and leaned toward him.

He began to speak, in the faintest possible whisper; Hal was not afraid of that, for no one could hear.

"Stranger," he whispered, "I don't think you're deaf. I've been watching you. You act like a man who was playing deaf instead. If you were really deaf you'd have tried to make some signs; you wouldn't have let me go on talking all this time without signaling you couldn't understand me."

Hal could not help an involuntary start at that, for he realized that it was all true,

he had been to much like a statue for a really deaf man.

Meanwhile the other went on, speaking rapidly, as if he had important things to communicate and knew that death might cut him short at any moment.

"Friend," he said, "for I call you friend, though you won't let me know who you are. You must be one of my countrymen or you wouldn't be here. It can do no harm in any case. You may get away; and if you do—oh, I pray you attend to this for me. Listen now."

Hal listened with all his ears, though he gave no sign.

"My name is Henry Thompson," whispered the man eagerly, "and I'm a private in the Twelfth Infantry. I live in New York at— But I must speak of the other first. I'm to be hanged, I don't know when this afternoon, and the news is important."

The man paused for a moment for breath, and gazed at Hal wistfully. It must have been terrible to him to be uncertain whether all his speaking was to be in vain.

But the young lieutenant still gave no sign; the other went on.

"I was sent out the day before yesterday by Shafter himself. If you see him tell him what I tell you. He's trying his best to find out how many of these Spanish devils there are in Santiago, and he thinks there are more than there are. Man, if he only knew he'd have the town in two days. There aren't 15,000—I doubt if there are 10,000 that can fight. And he ought to know it, comrade. Perhaps you'll have a chance to tell him; then he wants to know about the food supply. He can starve the place out, but it would be a thousand times better to attack it. Oh, if I only had some way of writing! I could give you all the information I spent two days in getting; it would

be as good as a thousand men, for I've got diagrams of all the earthworks and the number of troops exactly. I know all the weak spots—good Lord! it breaks my heart to think it must all die with me! I would give my life cheerfully if I could only get it to him. For it would be my life against thousands; but it breaks my heart to think that I have to die in vain!"

There was a look of wild agony on the man's face as he said that.

"Comrade," he panted, "do you suppose you could remember if I told you? Could you manage to get to Shafter?"

And still Hal made not a sound.

"Merciful Providence! what a heart you must have!" groaned the man.

He turned away with a look of despair; but there was evidently something else on his mind. And he soon turned back toward Hal.

"Sir," he whispered, "I don't know what to make of you, for you seem to lack feelings as well as a tongue. But I'll say what's weighing on my soul, and perhaps you will do this little favor. Perhaps when you've saved your own life you won't be quite so selfish—so hard. I don't know. But I've got to face my God to-night and I must say this. I've got a wife and three children at home in New York. I don't know what under Heaven will become of them, but I want them to know I'm really dead—oh, to save them all the agony of waiting. I—I'd give all I own just to see them—just—"

The thought was too much for the man, and he broke into his wild sobbing again. It was too much for Hal Maynard also.

The man looked up again, grasping him convulsively by the arm.

"You won't fail," he cried. "Promise me you won't fail. I know you hear me. And for Heaven's sake don't forget my

name—Henry Thompson; my address is on the records, of course."

The man stopped to choke down a sob, and then the thought of his duty seemed to get uppermost again.

"Do you think," he cried, eagerly, "you could remember a few facts if I told them to you? Oh, I could tell so much! Answer me, quickly."

Hal's brain was simply reeling at that moment. The man must have read his emotion in his face.

"You dare not refuse me!" he whispered, hoarsely. "Man, it is cowardly of you; it is a crime! I know what you are thinking; you think I'm a spy for those Spanish fiends. And you're afraid to take the risk. You're afraid to risk your life to save your country."

Hal could not help turning pale before such an argument as that. And the man saw it.

"You must think I'm a fool not to see that you hear me!" he cried. "Boy—for you're only a boy compared to me—I tell you you are trifling with life and death. You are playing a child's game among men, and you think you can fool me. I'm facing death, and I tell you it's hard to fool a man then."

And it was; those piercing eyes and that agonized look conquered Hal. He knew this man could tell him just what he was sent to learn.

"Quick!" whispered the man half in frenzy. My hours are numbered. Once for all, I ask you will you listen, can you remember what I tell you—the place for the army to attack—the way they can fool the Spaniards? Quick, I hear them coming! Oh, God! make him speak."

And Hal spoke.

"Go on," he whispered hastily. "I hear you."

And in one second the emotion all swept from the other's face; he laughed,

in a low, gleeful chuckle that smote Hal like a knife.

"Fool!" the man hissed.

He rose to his feet; the handcuffs dropped off as he shook his hands; and then he strode to the tent door.

He pushed the flap aside and shouted aloud:

"Varez! hello, there."

"What is it?"

"Come here. I've bagged him for you. He's a spy after all."

CHAPTER VII.

CAUGHT AT LAST.

We shall make no attempt to picture the feelings of Hal Maynard at that terrible moment. The first shock of horror brought him with a leap to his feet.

But then as there swept over him in all its terribleness the realization of what he had done, of what was before him, he sank back upon the ground, simply paralyzed.

He was lost!

He had let himself be trapped; he had failed in his commission, and he had the death of a spy before him!

He felt as if he could kill himself at that terrible moment; the keen disgrace of it was what smote him most. That he should have been such a fool as to let the villain deceive him in that way!

It must have been that thought which was uppermost in the mind of the other also, for when he had called to Lieutenant Varez he turned toward Hal again.

There was a smile of triumph on his face, he folded his arms and eyed his victim.

"So we were too many for you, sonny, weren't we," he laughed.

Hal could make no answer to him; he

was then dumb for a fact. He crouched in the corner of the tent eyeing the man just as a captive mouse might have eyed a cat.

The other enjoyed his triumph, which it must be confessed had been cleverly earned. It took no fool to deceive Hal Maynard.

"I'll give you the credit for having played your part well," laughed the man. "You held out longer than I thought."

At this moment the tent flap was pushed aside and the figure of the hated Varez appeared.

The lieutenant's face showed the joy he felt and he did not try to hide it.

"So you caught him after all!" he said. "Carramba but he was a sly dog."

"He died hard," chuckled the other. "But I told you I'd catch him."

"I congratulate you," Varez laughed. "The scamp half fooled me; and as for the colonel he had swallowed the whole thing."

"I thought he was really deaf, too, at first," Hal's conqueror replied. "But I cried some, and then he began to listen."

"Those Yankees must need information pretty badly," the other remarked. "Think of their pretending to shoot at him! Santa Maria, I'm glad we've got him!"

"So am I; where's the colonel?"

"He's coming now. I've sent for him."

When the old Spanish colonel appeared it may readily be believed that he was mad. Varez and the other man could say, "I told you so," but the other had been taken in completely, and he was wild.

He shook his fist in the prisoner's face.

"You scoundrel!" he cried. "You Yankee pig, you shall die to-night as sure as I live!"

By that time Hal, who seldom lost his self-possession, had had time to realize

once for all that he was lost, and to recover a little from the state of helpless despair and horror into which he had been thrown.

He made up his mind that if he died it should not be as a coward. These Spaniards should not see him tremble.

And so he raised his head and returned the colonel's stare.

"So you hear me, do you, you villain!" he cried. "Who are you, anyway?"

Hal did not answer, simply because he knew it would make the irate old fellow madder.

"Why don't you answer me, you Yankee pig?" he shouted. "Do you think I'm fool enough to believe still that you're deaf?"

"Perhaps his talking to Sancho tired him," laughed Varez. "He don't care to talk any more."

"I'll soon make him dumb for a fact!" snapped old Garcia.

He turned on his heel as he said that and strode out.

Varez and the other, whom he called Sancho, remained to gloat over their captive for a few moments more. It was plain that they considered their's a difficult triumph.

"There's no telling what damage the villain might not have done us," Varez said. "The colonel was going to trust him with dispatches."

"He won't go very far with them," the other laughed. "He's at the end of his rope, I guess, if you'll pardon the joke."

"I'll forgive you anything after the way you've fooled him," was the answer.

The two were silent for a few moments, and then they turned away.

"I must take off this cursed Yankee uniform," said Sancho.

"It would be a good idea to put it on him," was the response, "and let him

die in it. Garcia's so mad that I shouldn't wonder if he hung him any minute."

That cheering remark was the last that Hal heard as the two went out of the tent.

"Don't you let that fellow get away," Varez said to the sentry outside. "It's worth your while to watch him."

And then Hal was left in silence, except for the tramping of the soldier.

They were terrible thoughts that surged up in the young officer's mind as he lay thinking of what had happened. Shame at his failure and the disgrace of it, and still more shame at the fate that was before him.

"Oh, what a fool I was!" he groaned, gritting his teeth together.

And yet he could not help feeling that though the Spaniard had fooled him, yet it was only by playing upon a part of his nature that Hal had no cause to be ashamed of. As the man had said himself, Hal must have had a heart of stone to resist his appeal; and Hal neither had nor desired that.

He felt that where he had failed, no human being could have succeeded.

And he soon realized that he had no time to spend in useless repining; the thing was done and could not be helped. He was to die the death of a spy, and that perhaps in less than an hour. So the duty that was before him was to brace himself for the trial, and he felt that would take all his strength of mind for that.

And Mr. Sancho may think me a fool," Hal muttered, gripping his hands, "but he shan't think me a coward."

He wished that he might be able to get word to his friends to let them know of his fate, but he knew that even that was denied him. He was absolutely hopeless, absolutely lost. He had nothing to

do but gather himself together and face his death.

And very soon the color began to come back to his cheeks and the old fire to his eyes. Hal had indeed been completely cowed at first by the horror of the sudden discovery.

But this was an occasion to try a man, the young officer meant to prove equal to it. He had taken his life in his hands when he came; he had told General Shafter he was not afraid of death, and now he was to prove his words.

How long he had to wait he did not know, but he did not think it could be long, for the old Spanish officer was mad as a hornet. Even in his position Hal could not help a smile as he thought of how that old man must feel.

He wished that the time might be short, however. If he had had the slightest bit of hope he would have wished for the time to end. But having none he was anxious to have it over with.

He had his wish. Perhaps fifteen minutes passed away; and then the young officer's heart was set beating by a heavy tread on the ground outside.

It came straight toward the tent; and the flap was again pushed aside.

It was Varez again; and he strode in and took Hal by the arm.

"Come," he said, "we are ready for you."

CHAPTER VIII.

AN UNEXPECTED EVENT.

Hal had no doubt that his time had come, and so he summoned all his energies together.

As the two left the tent Varez glanced at the young man's face; Hal knew what he was looking for, a trace of fear; he meant that he should not find it.

Nor did he; Hal's step was firm and he held his head high.

Hal's hands were still fastened so there was no chance of his resisting; but the Spaniard kept his sword drawn.

Outside the prisoner glanced about him and saw that he was being led in the direction of the block-house.

That building will be the scene of the rest of our story, so it will be described to the reader.

It was a square affair, surrounded by four lines of trenches, at some distance. In the space enclosed were encamped three or four hundred soldiers, who were then guarding the trenches, expecting an attack at any moment.

The block-house was evidently meant to be the scene of the last stand. It was a square, low, wooded structure with loopholes for rifles and also for four small calibre rapid firing guns.

Hal was enough of a soldier to see that General Shafter had said this was indeed a strong position, mounted on a hill as it was. Those rapid firing guns would be terrible execution among the Americans when they charged.

But that fight Hal knew he would never live to see; in times like these an army makes quick work of captured spies. Far across the valley to the southeast

Hal could see General Shafter's camp; he saw the old flag floating there, and it brought tears to his eyes. He bowed his head for a moment.

And then once more he raised it and returned the Spaniard's haughty stare.

The two had almost reached the block-house before Varez said anything to indicate where they were bound.

"I suppose," he said, suddenly, "that you are satisfied to abandon the deaf and dumb trick now?"

It was said with a sneer, but Hal chose not to notice that.

"I am," he said, simply.

"And you are prepared to confess that you are a spy."

"I am."

"And what did you come for?"

"To get information as to the state of your defences."

"And who are you?"

"A lieutenant of cavalry in the United States army," was the answer.

Varez replied with a sarcasm about that being a nice errand for an officer to come on.

"Our officers do not put the hard work on the men," was Hal's retort; and it made the Spaniard flush, for there was truth in what it implied.

"However," Hal added, "this is no time to bandy words."

"Do you know what will become of you?" demanded the other.

"I do."

"What?"

"I suppose I will be either hung or shot; and I only hope that you will hurry up about it."

"There will be no delay," responded the other promptly. "You have only to state to the court martial what you stated to me and they will soon fix you."

"Court martial!" Hal could not help a slight start, and smile; so his foes were

going to be civilized and military enough to give him a trial.

Then he saw why he was being taken to the block-house; as he entered he gazed about him anxiously.

He found the place deserted, evidently in preparation for the formality. The soldiers were all at mess then.

Hal saw that everything inside was in readiness for the expected attack. Ammunition was piled by the heavy guns and the rifles were stacked in the corners. Only the call to quarters was needed to have everything prepared.

At present, however, a table had been placed in the centre of the floor and quite a different scene was anticipated.

The members of the "court" had not yet entered. Varez and his helpless prisoner were alone.

In the rear of the block-house there was a small outbuilding, used a sleeping quarters apparently, in time of peace. Into that the Spaniard pushed his prisoner.

"Wait there till you're wanted," he said.

Hal, thus left alone, thought for an instant of a chance to escape; but he might have known that his enemies would allow none. There was only one window in the little place, and that was barred with iron. Besides that Hal was handcuffed; he merely seated himself upon a chair and waited in silence.

But that silence was not long unbroken; it was broken in a most unexpected way, too.

There came another step in the doorway of the block-house and then a voice, one that made Hal give a start, for it was a light, girlish voice.

"Good-morning, señor lieutenant; and what are you doing now?"

Does any one blame Hal Maynard for getting up and going to the doorway to

see who that was; even a handcuffing and the prospect of death could not deprive him of curiosity, and some interest in the fair sex.

That was certainly a strange place for one to find a girl; Hal wanted to see who it was.

He glanced through a crack in the half shut door and saw an unexpected sight indeed.

It was a Cuban girl of about eighteen years. She was dressed in a sort of gypsy costume with a short skirt and a tambourine; she had come in dancing, and stood looking at the Spanish officer with a merry laugh playing about her mouth.

She was a girl of singular beauty—jet black hair and eyes, and the rosiest of cheeks; she was certainly an unexpected vision to Hal.

Apparently she was unexpected by the lieutenant also; for he looked at her as sternly as a man can look at a beautiful girl.

"Well, señor lieutenant," she repeated, with a merry laugh, "what are you up to now?"

"Nita," said the other, "you must not come in here."

"Must not indeed!" retorted the girl with a sly look and a ringing laugh. "When my señor is more of a gallant he will learn that young ladies don't like to have anybody say must to them. And I'm not going to be ordered about as if I were a common soldier. Because I'm not a soldier, so now! And when you say must I'm going to say won't!"

Which pretty speech the girl ended with a coquettish pout.

"You didn't talk to me that way when you were making love to me," she added. "And I don't like you a bit when you're cross."

The girl's black eyes danced merrily as she spoke; and it was plain that Lieuten-

ant Varez abandoned his idea of exerting authority.

"Now, Nita," he said, "I won't be cross, but you must honestly go out."

"And pray, sir, why?"

"Because, Nita, there's going to be a court martial."

"What's that?"

"They are going to try a spy."

"Indeed; and mayn't I see him tried?"

"No, Nita, there are going to be other officers; and the colonel will be here."

"I'm not afraid of the old colonel. He's ugly."

"Carramba! He might hear you!"

"I don't care. I'll tell him about it when he comes in. I know what's the matter, though; you want me to keep hidden away for fear I might fall in love with the colonel. Ha, ha!—you're jealous!"

The girl laughed merrily and pointed one finger at the officer. Then she executed half a dozen steps of a graceful dance, shaking the tambourine and tossing her beautiful hair about.

"You're jealous!" she cried again. I know you. Ho, ho!"

"You haven't given me much to be jealous of," said Varez glumly.

"Nor will I," was the response, "if you're cross to me and won't let me do what I want."

"But what do you want?"

"I wanted to see you; but now I don't care whether I do or not, for I'm mad."

Another pretty pout at the Spaniard. Varez did not seem able to escape the harm of those glances, though it was plain that he was anxious to get rid of his fair visitor.

"Now, Nita," he began again, "I promise to come see you the moment this thing is over with."

"Humph!" said the girl. "I don't doubt it. You're usually anxious enough to be with me. You wouldn't like me to send you away."

"You did it," said Varez promptly.

"A nice way to make love indeed!" retorted she. "I have many privileges which you haven't. And I choose to have my way just now."

Evidently the lieutenant had made up his mind that she'd have it whether he liked it or not. So he merely seated himself on the table and watched her.

He had certainly an interesting subject for observation; for a more vivacious and attractive countenance than that lively young girl's Hal had never seen.

As for her she seated herself on the table, but carefully keeping it between her and the officer. There she sat and smiled at him.

"I find you quite different from yesterday," said she. "Yesterday you were all smiles and good nature. I didn't think you'd change so soon."

"I haven't changed, Nita," said the other, with a heavy sigh.

But Miss Nita only made a face, and slid farther down the table. Evidently she had not come for love-making then.

"No, sir," she said, "that ugly colonel might come; and that dreadful court. Who is it you're going to try?"

"An American."

"Ahem! Definite! Is he young?"

"Very."

"And good-looking?"

"Fairly so."

"Indeed! how interesting. And what's to be done with him?"

"Hang him."

The young girl's face turned pale.

"Santa Maria!" she cried holding up her hands. "What a heartless man you are. Where is he?"

"In the other room there."

The coquettish young lady's pity all vanished at that announcement; her curiosity was aroused.

"Oh!" she cried. "And may I see him?"

Apparently that question was asked merely for form's sake—for the girl did not wait for an answer.

She darted toward the door where Hal was.

"Nita!" cried Varez sharply.

The girl faced about.

"Sir!" she demanded mocking the other severely with a cleverness that was simply irresistible.

It was so to the Spaniard, for he changed his tone.

"Now, dearest," he said, "you mustn't go in there."

"And why not?"

Varez had caught her by the arm as if to hold her back, as she turned and glanced up at his face he slipped his arm about her waist.

But Miss Nita very promptly pushed him away.

"No, sir!" she cried.

"And why not, Nita?"

"If I can't have my way you can't have yours."

"But what is your way?" asked Varez anxiously.

He evidently seemed to think that the converse of the girl's proposition was also true, that if she had her way he might have his.

"I told you once," said the girl, "I wish you would not oppose me. And I want to see that prisoner."

Varez yielded.

"Come on," said he.

And still keeping her hand in his he started to lead her toward the door.

But the coquettish miss withdrew her hand.

"Thank you," said she. "I can go alone."

"No, Nita—" began Varez.

But she interrupted him instantaneously pouting again.

"There, you are saying no again!" she cried. "Now I told you I didn't like that and I won't have it, sir. I'm going there and see that prisoner all by myself."

And her black eyes shone; she folded her arms in the prettiest pose of defiance. And all the while there was a mere smile twitching about the corners of her mouth as she observed the officer's perplexity.

As for him he could not take his eyes away from that beautiful face.

"Now, Nita," he protested, "I can let you—"

"Ahem! First it was won't. Now it can't. And pray why?"

Varez hesitated.

"It's against orders—" he began.

"Orders indeed! If I were an officer bet nobody would dare give me order. And that's not it at all, sir. That's in the reason."

"Pray, then, what is it?"

"It's that foolish jealousy of yours. You think I can't ever see anybody without their falling in love with me—"

"You can't, Nita."

"So now you try flattery, do you? Indeed! But you say this young man handsome. And you're not handsome. You see, so you're jealous."

Varez looked so uncomfortable at the remark that the girl broke into a mere peal of laughter that rang through the block-house.

"So he's mad now!" she cried. "O lieutenant! Dear, dear, mad with me! How shall I make friends again? I think I'll have to give him a kiss."

The wisdom of that suggestion was a

rent in an instant; all of Varez's annoyance vanished at the words.

He sprang toward the girl.

"Nita!" he cried eagerly.

Miss Nita, who evidently knew how to play her part, waited just long enough for the officer to catch her by the waist, and then she proceeded to protest.

"No, sir!" she cried. "No, sir!"

"Nita," pleaded Varez anxiously.

But the girl was obdurate.

"No, sir. Not now!" she said.

Varez noticed the accent on now.

"Then when, Nita?" he cried.

"Just as soon as you let me have my way."

And that stroke won. Varez capitulated.

"You may have it, dearest," he said.

"Ahem!" laughed the girl merrily.

That is the way I want my lover always talk."

And then, assuming a grave and military bearing, glaring sternly at the lieutenant, she raised one of her beautiful brows.

"Now, sir, for the test of your obedience. Lieutenant Varez!"

Varez, entering into the humor of the thing, saluted.

"Here," said he.

"You will march over to the other side of the block-house by that big—that hat you call is—cannon, and there you'll stand until I have inspected my prisoner. And you are not to move until I give you permission."

The promptness with which the officer obeyed that "order" showed how much a slave of the beautiful girl he was.

As for her she began dancing again; when she saw that he had sat down on the "cannon" she danced into the little compartment where Hal was, casting back Varez as she went a glance that was

more bewitching than any she had so far vouchsafed him.

All of this little play of wits had of course been anxiously watched by Hal Maynard.

He saw what Lieutenant Varez, who was blinded by his love did not see. He saw it plainly too and beyond any doubt. He wondered what it could mean.

That girl had entered that block-house for no other purpose but to see him!

Hal had seen every glance of hers and noted every word; he had watched the cleverness with which she led up to the subject, the way in which she gained her point. His heart began to beat excitedly as he realized that she had won.

But his emotions were nothing to what they were when he learned what that girl had come for; he was so amazed that he could hardly stand.

The girl wasted not one second in delay. The instant she was inside and out of sight of Varez she glided swiftly over toward Hal.

She said not a word; she had stepped back as she entered, but she darted around behind him.

And a moment later the young man's heart gave a great leap; she had seized his handcuffs!

"Poor boy!" she muttered, aloud. "What a shame to kill you!"

That was meant for Varez, evidently, at the same time the girl fumbled at the handcuffs and Hal, who was straining his ears, heard a faint click.

And in a second more his hands were free!

CHAPTER IX.

"MY PRISONERS, CABALLEROS."

The girl had a key, and she had unlocked the handcuffs.

"I think it's a shame!" she cried. "You're so much better looking than my lieutenant. And the idea of hanging you! Bah! I don't believe you're a spy at all."

And then, as she ceased, she whispered to Hal—words that made him gasp.

"Hal Maynard!"

"Why—" he panted. "How—"

"Ssh! For your life! Don't make a move till I signal you. Take this!"

And Hal felt something cold shoved into his hand. He grasped it.

It was a revolver!

"Poor boy!" cried the girl. "Tell me, are you a spy? What! You won't answer me? Humph! You needn't glare at me, I'm sure for I wouldn't hang you."

There was a moment's silence.

"I tell you what I'll do. I think I'll make my lieutenant set you free."

And then with another shake of her tambourine and a merry laugh she danced out of the room.

"He's sulky," she cried to Varez. "He's just like you and I don't like him a bit. But I think it's a shame to hang him though."

Varez laughed softly.

"So you didn't fall in love with him after all, did you?" he smiled.

"No, and so you needn't be jealous," said the girl.

"And now, I suppose you're trying to get me to let him go," laughed the other. "And you won't keep your promise until I do."

As he said that he stepped toward the

girl; she, for she still meant to keep up the role of coquetry, shrank back.

"Don't you keep your promises, Nita?" asked Varez eagerly.

He took hold of her hand; but just then the little tete-a-tete was interrupted in a way which made Varez frown.

He heard a heavy step outside.

"The colonel!" he muttered.

"Ho, ho!" laughed the girl. "Then I must run."

And before Varez could say a word, she darted outside. She had scarcely disappeared before the tall figure of Colonel Garcia appeared in the doorway.

There was a smile on his face as he looked in.

"You have a pretty visitor, lieutenant," he said.

Varez turned it away with a laugh.

"Yes," he said. "I deserve to be congratulated, and envied."

And that was all that was said of the subject. Apparently there was nothing unusual in Spanish officers receiving fair visitors.

Another man entered just then. It was the third member of the court martial. Hal, who, it may be believed, was peering out anxiously, saw that it was none other than Sancho, his deceiver.

He started as he saw that. And he gripped his revolver like death.

That they were the only ones who were coming was evident to Hal from what the senior officer said:

"We are all ready for business," he remarked. "And let's have it over with in a few moments."

As he said that he laid his sword on the table, and took a seat.

Sancho did likewise; he was now no longer an American prisoner, but a Spanish captain in full uniform.

"We will stop for no formalities," said the colonel, abruptly. "I must

ake haste. Lieutenant, where is the isoner?"

"In the other room, sir."

"Handcuffed and secured?"

"Yes, sir."

"And what have you made out of im?"

"He has confessed."

"Oh! The scamp! And he talks, now, does he? Well, then all we have to do is to hear him say so, gentlemen of the court martial."

That last was said with a smile. The old man had evidently recovered his good humor now.

As he spoke, Lieutenant Varez turned and walked toward the place of Hal's concealment.

The moment had evidently come, then. There was no signal from the girl, but Hal was prepared to act, none the less.

What were his emotions at that critical instant may be imagined, from the deepest despair he had suddenly been raised to the wildest joy, and that by an incident as sudden as it was unexpected. Now he was crouching behind that open door gripping his revolver and holding his breath.

There was not a particle of fear in his heart; it was all resolution and daring.

For he felt like a free man now. Compared with his former state, he was indeed free.

And his lips were compressed in a way that boded ill for the members of that informal court martial. To escape Hal could not hope, but he meant that at least they should die with him.

And he meant that Varez should go first, and then Captain Sancho, the most cunning of them all.

The three had not of course the faintest suspicion of the startling scene that

was before them—no more than the victim of the lightning stroke has warning of the bolt about to fall.

They were all of them pleased and smiling; all of them had laid their weapons upon the table at which they were sitting.

It was a matter of only a second or two for Varez to walk to the door; but at times like that the mind works quickly. Hal had time to think of what he was going to do, and time left to think what part in this drama the girl his rescuer meant to take.

And then he heard the lieutenant's voice:

"Come, Mr. Deaf Man, we wait for you."

Hal cocked his revolver silently, and then took one step. But he did not take a second.

For at that moment he heard the merry jingle of the girl's tambourine. She was coming!

Hal started back, half in surprise. What part could she have to play in the scene that was to follow?

As for the lieutenant he whirled about; he was just in time to see the fair gypsy come dancing in.

"Nita!" he cried, in amazement.

But the girl acted as if she did not hear him. There was still the same merry smile upon her face, and she sang some rollicking song as she entered.

And though the other two officers stared at her she kept on until she reached the centre of the room. There she stopped and gazed about her.

Colonel Garcia rose to his feet, at the same time Varez darted at the girl.

"Nita!" he cried. "You are mad!"

"She is indeed," said the elder officer, sternly. "Young woman, have the goodness to leave us."

But the cause of this commotion lost

not a bit of her self-possession; she fairly beamed upon the officers.

"Senors," she said, "I thought you might like to see a dance. Look!"

And again she broke into her wild song and began her graceful dance. Varez grasped her by the arm.

"Go!" he cried. "Go!"

Hal Maynard was almost as much amazed by the actions of the girl as Varez was; he could not see what was to be gained by her presence.

But he saw a moment later; for as the officer seized her the girl leaped back.

And she struck the table with a crash. She sent it tumbling over, and with it the officers' weapons went flying across the room!

And at the same instant the girl turned toward Hal.

"Now!" she cried. "Mira!"

And with one leap, Hal bounded through the door.

"My prisoners, caballeros!" he cried in triumph.

And he leveled his revolver at the three.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SIGNAL TO SHAFTER.

Oh! what a moment of triumph that was! Hal Maynard's heart was fairly bounding and his eyes were gleaming.

As for the three Spaniards, who can picture their consternation? They were almost too much horrified to move.

Of the three Varez alone had the slightest idea what this could mean. He knew—he—that "Nita" had played him this trick.

And with an oath of rage, he made a leap for his weapons.

Hal's revolver was aimed at him, but to fire would mean to give the alarm.

Hal did not want to do that; Varez knew it, and so did Nita.

Yes; for it was the girl's quickness that sealed the officer's fate. She saw Hal about to fire; but she was nearer to the swords than Varez.

And she made a leap for them and snatched up one; as the lieutenant stooped and stretched out his hand he felt the point of it at his breast.

"Quidada!" cried the girl. "Back!"

And there was no love in that voice, no hesitation; it was fierce resolution, even hatred. And the Spaniard staggered back with a hiss of rage.

As for the other two, they had not moved; it was too late a second afterward for the girl snatched out a revolver from under her jacket. And the three were then prisoners indeed.

The swiftness with which those two worked was born of the desperate peril of their situation. Not a word was necessary; each knew what to do.

Hal stepped to the door and swung it to; in a second more he had it bolted fast as iron and steel could bolt it.

That shut out the possibility of their being seen, and then while Hal covered the prisoners the girl hastily gathered up the weapons and put them out of reach.

"Now, senors," said Hal, calmly "only a little more. There is rope in the corner, Nita."

The girl's quick eye had already seen it and she had sprung toward it. When she snatched it up she went toward Varez first.

"Hands behind your back, senor," she said, with a smile that made the Spaniard's blood boil.

"Dog!" he cried. "I tell you——"

"You tell her one word more and I will stick you on his sword," said Hal, calmly. "It will make no noise, either."

The man fairly fumed with rage; but he had to submit.

"You are prisoners, anyway," he snarled. "It will do you no good."

"We will try it, anyhow," was Hal's spouse.

Nita surprised him by the swiftness and the deftness with which she tied that officer's hands; then, wagging her head at him with the mischievous air she wore so well, she commanded:

"Down, sir! Sit down."

And so she tied his feet.

Then she stepped toward the horrified colonel Garcia.

"Pardon, señor," she said. "The exigencies of war, you know. It is not leap year but I shall ask you for your hand—both, if you please."

"I declare," Hal muttered as he watched her, "if she keeps on smiling like that I shall be more in love than Varez."

The girl had quite a sense of humor, as the reader has doubtless seen. She had a chance to give it full vent while she was tying up that dignified old colonel. It must have been an unpleasant minute for the colonel.

And then there was only Captain Sancho left. Of all of them Hal Maynard enjoyed that most.

"Señor," he said, with fine sarcasm, "you may weep in earnest now."

Having seen all three safely bound Hal put the revolver in his belt, and the girl laid down her sword. The two turned and stared at each other.

"What next?" inquired she. "More worlds to conquer, Lieutenant Hal?"

"One thing first," said Hal. "Tell me who you are and how you know my name."

The girl laughed one of her merriest laughs, and then she came close to Hal and gazed into his face.

"Do you mean," she asked, "you do not know me yet?"

Hal stared at her; he felt then, as he had felt once before, that somewhere he had seen that face. It looked like someone he knew. But he could not think.

He shook his head and the young girl shook hers in return.

"Then I shall not tell you," she said. "Wait until it is over."

"What is over?"

"Until we are free; we are still in the enemy's hands."

"Yes," said Hal, "we are."

He bent his thoughts to the problem. How were these two in that solitary block-house to defend themselves against four hundred Spaniards?

"We must fight some time," said the girl. "I will do my share."

"Can you shoot?"

"I can."

"Very well; the odds are terrible, but we will get ready, and fight them now."

"One thing more," said she. "We might have help. The Amer——"

She said no more; for Hal started back as if he had been shot.

"Great heavens!" he gasped, "I forgot."

"What's the matter?" cried the girl. Hal was calm again in an instant more.

"It is nothing," he said. "I have thought of something. And we are safe."

"Safe! What do you mean? What is it?"

Hal said nothing, but he set to work to make everything ready; the girl watching him eagerly helped him lay the tiles opposite the loopholes, examining the magazines to see if they were loaded.

The heavy guns were loaded with canister, as Hal noticed with pleasure; that was all that was to be done.

There was a little ladder leading to a trap door in the roof; Hal ascended it

rapidly, and saw the Spanish flag waving above.

"I can't reach the staff," he said. "It'll be rusty to go out. But I can fix it."

With the words he drew his revolver; he took but one second's aim and then fired.

He cut the halliards.

And as the flag came sailing down Hal calmly closed the trap door and barred it.

"It is done," he said, descending. "They will come."

And his statement was substantiated by what happened a second later. There were astonished shouts among the Spaniards outside, and then the boom of a distant gun.

"Americanos!" shouted some one outside, and Hal merely smiled.

Shafter had kept his promise.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CHARGE.

Hal's shot and the falling of the Spanish flag was a signal for the wildest excitement. Its effect upon the Spaniards may be imagined by the reader.

There were wild shouts from a hundred throats, and then as the American gun across the valley boomed out there came a heavy knock upon the door.

"Colonel Garcia!" roared a voice. "To arms! The Yankees are coming."

The block-house gave never a sound.

"Santa Maria!" roared the man. "Where's the colonel?"

His voice was drowned by the rattle of a drum. Hal, peering out through the loopholes, could see the excited Spaniards flying about in every direction.

By that time there was a whole mob of them trying to get inside. They were pounding savagely at the door and yelling like maniacs.

EVERYONE, EXCEPT CRIMINALS, LIKE NICK CARTER.

But Hal knew that the door was built to stand a siege; he stood in the centre of the room with a calm smile upon his face, waiting for the time to begin.

It was not long before the Spaniards dragged up a log to use as a battering ram; and the young lieutenant promptly seized a rifle and stepped to one of the portholes.

He opened fire into the mass of men; the shouts and shrieks were redoubled. And some one must have understood, then, what was wrong.

"Por dios! It's that spy! He's killed the colonel!"

Hal's swift fire was too much for the Spaniards, who fled in every direction; their shouts, however, were suddenly taken up by the girl.

"Here they come," she cried. "Santa Maria! the Americans!"

The firing from the American camp had developed by that time into a cannonade. Apparently General Shafter himself must have seen that flag fall, and as he said he must have been all ready to attack.

For the girl's shouts were caused by the fact that out of the woods where they had been camped came line after line of the infantry, sweeping across the valley straight toward the Spanish block-house.

What was the perplexity of the Spaniards may be imagined. They were between two fires.

"Take the block-house!" shouted some.

"To the trenches!" shouted others.

Meantime all were rushing about wildly; old Garcia and Sancho were both prisoners and the soldiers had no leader to command; what was the state of mind of the captured officers in the block-house scarcely needs to be told.

As for Hal, he spent his time emptying one rifle after another into the Spaniards; he was a splendid shot, and he had a fair

target. He had not time to glance at the girl, but she was doing her share.

Meanwhile the American cannonading continued and on swept the troops, their officers leading them on up the hill, their flags waving before them.

They must have been surprised at the little resistance they met with. Not once were the heavy guns fired until they were half way up the hill. Then as the Spaniards crowded into the trenches Hal prang to one of the guns and trained it on them.

The effect of that shot was frightful; it was followed an instant later by another. And the two completely demoralized the Spaniards.

The Americans had not had a mile to charge; by that time the foremost line had almost reached the trenches, pouring a withering fire into the enemy as they came on.

And Hal's shots completed the work; the Spaniards were no cowards, but they could not stand before such a double attack as that; they scattered in every direction, and the Americans came dashing into the defenses, cheering madly.

Oh, what a moment of triumph that was; the moment Hal saw that his enemies were in full retreat he rushed to the door and unbolted it. When the first of

his comrades arrived they found him at the door to welcome them, his face and form covered with smoke and blood, but wild with joy and triumph.

And there was another at his side; Hal turned to glance at his fair companion.

His consternation may be imagined; the Cuban girl had disappeared!

And Hal found himself gazing into the laughing eyes of Juan Ramirez!

Hal gasped for breath.

"Good heavens!" he cried, "was that you?"

"It looks like it," said Juan, bursting into laughter.

"In Heaven's name! how did you manage that disguise?"

"Oh, it was easy," Juan laughed. "Did you fall in love with me, too?"

But the two friends had no time to discuss the matter then. For they were seized by their wildly-delighted comrades, wrapped in two of their country's flags, and borne in triumph out before the victorious regiments, the heroes of the day.

[THE END.]

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